

The One by FangirlingStrangerThings

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Summary: When El is lost in the storm, Mike will always find her. A fluffy Valentine's one shot for all of the Mileven lovers out there :-)

Happy Valentine's Day!

AN: Happy Valentine's Day everyone :-)

This is dedicated to the lovely genesismalfoy as it's her birthday! Happy birthday C! :-D I asked her for a prompt as a birthday present and she gave me the song 'I Turn To You' by Christina Aguilera. I gave it a good listen and this is the result. I really hope you all enjoy this, especially you C!

When I'm lost in the rain, in your eyes I know I'll find the light to light my way.

When I'm scared, losing ground, when my world is going crazy you can turn it all around.

And when I'm down you're there pushing me to the top.

You're always there giving me all you've got.

For a shield from the storm, for a friend, for a love to keep me safe and warm, I turn to you.

For the strength to be strong, for the will to carry on.

For everything you do, for everything that's true I turn to you.

El's eyelids were twitching rapidly, a sheen of sweat was beading on her forehead as her usually smooth skin creased into a deep frown. Her head thrashed against her pillow as she whimpered incomprehensive words that were lost under her breath.

She could see the lab, the steely eyes watching her through a small bullet proof glass window of her locked door and the booming sound of distant thunder. Her heart was racing, her pulse jumping against her wrist as she continued to writhe and whimper in her sleep.

The bedroom was lit up as a bolt of lightning flashed through the sky and El awoke, jolting upright gasping for breath as her sweat soaked chest heaved for oxygen.

Her room flashed with light once more and El startled, her eyes wide as she threw back the tangled blanket and stumbled out of bed. She felt disoriented as her bare feet padded out to the living room, her footsteps picking up pace as she hurried to Hopper's bedroom.

She blinked in surprise seeing the empty room, the made up bed occasionally illuminated by the approaching storm. El bit down on her quivering lower lip as she realised that Hopper wasn't here and she was alone. A rumble of thunder broke through the silence and El ran, the darkness of the cabin suddenly make her feel just as trapped at 16 years old as she had as a child. She needed air, she needed freedom.

She barely knew what she was doing or where she was going as her bare feet hit the wet grass, stumbling into the woods, her heart in her throat and her body tense with fear. With every crack of thunder came a flashback of the locked cell and the steely eyes watching her. She wanted to run from her past and never stop.

It was impossible to say how long El had been running before a sheet of rain filled the sky and downpoured over her thin body, awakening her senses and finally grounding her to the situation. She paused, blinking as she finally looked up at the illuminated sky and moved her gaze around the break in the trees, wondering where exactly she was and how she had got there.

Heavy rain drops clung to El's eyelashes as she squinted around in the darkness trying to gather her sense of direction and get herself back to safety. She walked slowly and carefully towards where she thought the road might be. Her bare feet stung as they brushed against twigs and soaken leaves.

El wrapped her arms around her body, trying to ward off the tremble that ran through her as the torrential downpour caused her pyjamas to stick to her skin, bathing her in a bitter chill. Her chest felt tight and she gasped, trying to hold in the desperate need to sob. How could she be so stupid as to run off in a storm? Why did Hopper have to be on the night shift?

El flinched as a distant bolt of lightning caused memories to once again flash across her mind. She thought she had recovered, the years of counselling having helped with the deep wound inside of her, but never truly *healing* it.

The thunder was getting louder, rumbling and growling, loud and booming as El jumped and gasped, hurrying towards where she thought the trees were evening out as terrible sounds swirled around her, "stand back!" her mother's terrified voice warned before shooting anyone who got in between her and her daughter, the relief in Benny's voice that someone was there to help the scared little girl before bang, his selfless life was ended.

Guns, violence, death, all because of her.

A sob ripped from El's chest and warm tears joined the raindrops that swirled down her cheeks. She hurried towards where the distant road was coming into view, no other thought in her mind but to get to safety.

Her bare feet met the tarmac of the sidewalk and El gasped, a relief rippling through her trembling body before she realised she wasn't in the clear yet. Her hazel eyes flickered to the road sign, the directions depicted on the sign meaning two different things to her.

The left arrow pointing towards downtown where she knew she would find her protective father, who would no doubt wrap his arms around her and take care of her.

Her eyes moved to the right arrow and she exhaled a shaky breath. The right arrow would take her to her *true* home, to the one person who could calm her over any other. To the person who always made her feel safe and warm.

El's body angled towards the right, ready to be where she really needed to go when bright distant lights flooded her vision. She blinked, moving an arm over her forehead to try and shield her gaze slightly.

The lights were getting closer, moving slowly, almost cautiously as they approached her. Before El could even realise what they were, the lights stopped moving and there was the sound of a lock clicking open as a tall figured moved from behind the bright and warm glow.

"El?"

Her name was said with such tenderness, concern and love that it could only ever have been one person.

"Mike?" El sobbed, her heart pounding and her body tense in anticipation.

"El," Mike gasped in relief, closing what she now realised was his car door before he hurried over to her, his form being illuminated by the soft hue of the lights.

She could see the panic and worry written all over his face while his eyes flickered with love and that burning need to protect her.

"H-How did you k-know I was out h-here?" El quivered moving closer to Mike as he shook off his jacket and wrapped it around her, engulfing her immediately in warmth as his arm moved around her waist, pulling her close to his side as he walked them over to his car.

"The storm," Mike said in a shaky voice, his eyes wide with concern as his gaze danced across her face. "It woke me up and I was worried about you. I tried to supercom but you didn't answer. I wanted to make sure you were okay."

El's eyes glanced down at Mike's clothes realising he was in his pyjamas too, the soft cotton of his shirt clinging to him as the rain washed over them both. The warmth of Mike's jacket heated El's skin and she frowned, "you're going to get cold."

A smile broke through Mike's concern and he shook his head in light amusement, "it's fine El. I'd rather you be warm."

Despite the thunder and the lightning that flashed across their faces, El couldn't help the smile that curved on her lips as she looked up at her boyfriend, her eyes warming as much as her heart.

Mike opened the passenger door and helped El into the car, she cringed feeling bad about how soaking wet she was as her back hit the cool fabric of the seat. She watched through the rain splattered windscreen as Mike closed the door and hurried over to the drivers side of the car, quickly joining her and getting out of the storm. He exhaled a relieved breath and turned to look at her, his eyes dancing across her face as he reached for her fingers locked and El felt immediately grounded, like Mike was the only thing that stopped her from losing herself.

They sat in silence as they continued to stare at each other, soaking in one another's presence while rain pounding against the car, sharp but almost soothing drops of water splattered across the windscreen, glittering in the darkness.

"Are you okay?" Mike eventually whispered, his voice incredibly soft as his thumb brushed against the back of El's hand.

She closed her eyes for a moment, inhaling Mike's scent that surrounded her, hearing his gentle breathing and the caress of his hand against hers.

"I am now."

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"Not yet," El mumbled quietly, shaking her head slightly as she slowly opened her eyes and looked back at her boyfriend. He frowned, unable to hide the worry in his gaze but he didn't protest. He nodded his head and gave her an understanding smile that warmed her from the inside out.

Mike squeezed El's hand and sighed heavily as his gaze lingered on the rain cover windscreen. "I suppose we should get you back to the cabin..."

"No," El blurted out, surprising Mike who turned to look at her, his eyebrows rising in surprise.

El felt breathless as she looked at him, those dark starry eyes that were the window to the soul she knew and loved, the soft almost red lips that made butterflies swarm into her stomach and the flickering of freckles that El loved to count. It wasn't just his aesthetical beauty that stunned her, it was what lay inside; the biggest and most beautiful heart she could have ever found. There was no one that could calm her down like he could, no one that she would rather spend every second of every day with.

"Can we go to your house?"

Mike's lips parted as if he wanted to say how it wasn't a good idea, that his mom would catch them and there would be all hell to pay. But as his dark eyes stared into the depths of the warm hazel, he smiled and nodded. "Of course we can."

El exhaled a shaky breath and smiled in relief, reaching for her seatbelt as Mike hurried to mimic her action. He was just turning the key in the ignition when El's palm moved across his face, cupping his cheek as she slowly turned his face to hers.

She leaned over the central console, her eyelashes fluttering closed as her lips found Mike's like they were drawn to a magnet. It was a gentle brush of their mouths together but it said so much. It was a thank you, it was an *I love you* and it was a electricity more powerful than any storm could ever produce.

El pulled back enough to watch Mike's eyes slowly open, a dazed look in his starry gaze before he blinked and a large, helpless grin curved on his red lips. He exhaled a relieved and shaky breath, keeping his eyes on El as he started the engine.

Their fingers remained entwined together as Mike drove with one hand on the steering wheel, his eyes occasionally lingering on El who got more comfy in the now wet seat and closed her eyes, burying her nose into Mike's jacket, inhaling his scent as it took away the last chill and fear within her blood, replacing it with an undeniable safety and warmth.

The darkness and quiet of the basement was interrupted with the scratch of the key turning in the door and the slight creak of the wood when Mike slowly pushed it open, El's hand in his as they both

tiptoed into the large space, closing and locking the door behind them.

Their eyes hadn't adjusted yet to the lack of light but Mike knew the basement like the back of his hand as he carefully manoeuvred with El to where he knew the lamps would be. He started with the taller lamp by the couch, bathing the room in a golden glow before crouching down by the blanket fort and turning on the small plug in bulb that added a hue of warmth and removed the shadows caused by the sheets.

As Mike stood back up and turned back to El, he caught her exhaling a relieved sigh as her gaze moved around the room, the tension starting to leave her beautiful face as she reacquainted herself with her first home.

Mike could only watch her for a moment, completely captivated. Not only was she the most beautiful girl he had ever seen, she was also strong, smart, powerful and brave. His heart ached and his fingers itched, wanting to hold her forever.

It only took for El to shiver involuntarily for Mike to be brought out of his gaze, remembering that she had been stuck in the storm for god knows how long.

He took the few steps towards her and reached for her hand again, frowning when he realised how cold it was. His eyes met her own sparkling hazel orbs and he smiled slightly, unable to stop the happiness that bubbled inside of him despite the situation.

"I'm going to get us some dry clothes and how would you feel about a hot drink and some food?"

El's smile in return was so bright and grateful that Mike lost all thought for a moment, falling completely into her warm hazel eyes.

"Eggos?" El asked hopefully through chattering teeth as Mike quickly nodded, smiling despite himself.

"Would it have been anything else?" he couldn't help but tease, feeling a grin full of pride stretch his cheeks when El giggled in reply.

Mike leaned forward, pressing his lips to his girlfriend's soft forehead, his nose burying into her hair for a moment as his senses filled with her scent. It was sweet, floral, homely and just *El*. Mike felt himself relax completely and it took a moment before he could pull away, the pressing matter of getting El warm and fed rushing back to the front of his mind.

He hurried over to the clean laundry pile, sifting through the contents until he found a pair of sweatpants that he knew El would need to roll up considering his last two growth spurts. Mike grabbed his blue sweater, a tingle in his heart as his mind took him back to that stormy November night in 1983.

Mike grabbed a pair of socks for good measure and walked back to El, grinning slightly when he saw her eyes go to the clothes with relief. He knew she loved wearing his clothes stating they were homely and cosy, like being constantly wrapped up in a hug. Mike would be lying if he said hearing her say that didn't fill his stomach with butterflies and make him grin like a fool.

"Thank you," El breathed out, her smile soft as she took the clothes from Mike, looking up at him beneath long eyelashes as she cradled the clothes to her chest.

He felt himself wanting to melt, a combination of her sweetness, her love and those eyes stopping his heart but then making it almost pound straight out of his chest.

"I love you," Mike blurted out, unable to stop the overwhelming emotion. It wasn't the first time they had said it of course, especially not after all of the drama in 1985. But saying those words to her meant just as much as they did the first time he said them.

El beamed, her eyes lighting up brighter than any bolt of electricity. Her smile stretched her cheeks, making the adorable dimple appear that Mike sighed so happily over.

"I love you too," she exhaled, her voice wavering with emotion as she stepped closer. "So much."

Mike's chest felt light and happy as his fingers moved delicately to

El's cheeks, she reached up for him just as he leant down. Their lips met and they both smiled into the kiss, a happy hum escaping El that made Mike's heart leap. "So, so much," he mumbled against her lips, her returning giggle making him only pepper her with more kisses until she really was laughing and they both remembered that it was the middle of the night and if his mom knew he had his girlfriend over at this hour, there would be hell to pay. Mike chose to not even think about the reaction Hopper would have.

"So..." El grinned, a mischievous glint in her eyes. "Eggos?"

A blush rose to Mike's cheeks as he blinked and realised he had once again been too distracted by his girlfriend to remember what he was actually meant to be doing. "Right!" he exclaimed, laughing slightly as he headed towards the stairs. "Eggos. I'll be right back."

El grinned and nodded her head, amusement twinkling in her eyes as she headed towards the bathroom and Mike moved as quickly and yet as quietly as he could up the stairs and into the kitchen.

He moved on autopilot, grabbing a handful of Eggos from the freezer and placing them in the toaster before hurrying up to his bedroom to change out of his own soaked pyjamas. Mike pulled open the draw of his dresser and hunted for another pair of pyjama pants when his hand found a small wrapped gift. He stared at it for a moment, reality finally coming back to him as his dark gaze moved to the calendar above his desk and he let out a low chuckle. It was Valentine's day. The early hours yes, but *still*, it was Valentine's day. And while he would still stop at the flower shop on the way to school to collect the dozen red roses he had ordered, it felt like this was the perfect time to give El the present he had been paying off for months. The item he had painstakingly worked for, all so it would be perfect for his girl.

Mike inhaled a quick breath and grabbed a pair of pyjama pants, busying himself with getting dressed before nervously grabbing the small wrapped present and tucking it into his pocket.

It was another five minutes before Mike had gathered the Eggo plate, two mugs of hot cocoa and carefully placed them on a tray, his arms shaking slightly as he carried it down the basement stairs. For a minute his searching eyes couldn't find El and a panic rose up in his chest, a part of him that would always worry about her being taken. But there she was, sitting in the blanket fort, her legs stretched out in front of her with a comforter draped over her. Her warm smile was enough to make Mike's heart race as he walked over with the tray.

"Here you go," he sighed happily, crouching down to hand over the tray to El whose eyes had already moved to the Eggos, an adorable excitement flicking in her gaze.

"Thank you," she whispered in a breath before eagerly reaching for an Eggo and patting the space next to her.

They had adapted the blanket fort over the years, but even with extra sheet and further space, Mike's legs still dangled out of the opening of their hideaway. Not that he cared of course. He would happily curl in on himself all night if it meant El was by his side.

Mike crawled into the fort, awkwardly moving his long limbs and making El giggle when his mop of dark hair brushed against the ceiling as he adjusted his position. Finally he rested next to his girlfriend, propping himself up on an elbow as he took his hot cocoa and grinned like the fool in love he was when El fed him a bit of Eggo. For a while they just relaxed in the solace of each other's company, sipping their drinks and eating as the atmosphere calmed them both.

The storm was finally leaving Hawkins, the thunder only now a distant sound, growing weaker and weaker. Mike lay on his back while El tucked up under his arm, melting into him as much as possible. Her head lay on his chest and she closed her eyes listening to his steady and strong heartbeat while he stroked through her hair. Her eyelids were heavy with how relaxed she felt.

"Thank you," she whispered into the peace of their blanket fort, in the arms of the one she loved.

"What for?" Mike asked softly, his nose brushing against her hair as he left a feather light kiss on her forehead.

El shuddered as a heavy sigh escaped her tight chest. Her hand clutched at Mike's shirt, wanting him close always, needing him to be her anchor.

"For everything. For always taking me out of the storm, for always understanding, for always being my light, for always loving me, for a-always..." El's lip trembled as tears poured down her cheeks. She felt Mike's warm hand find her cheek and tilt her face up slightly so he could look deep into her eyes.

She stared back into the dark starry eyes, the first set of eyes that had ever looked at her with love, the first to ever care about her and want to *help* her, to provide her with what she needed in life.

"For always being my home."

Mike's breath caught in his throat and he pulled El closer, his eyes wet as he looked so intensely at his love.

"I would do anything for you El, you only have to name it. You are...everything to me. You are the best thing that ever happened to me and I will always love you, I will always be there to keep you safe and warm. I want to be your home always."

"Do you promise?" El gasped, her tears catching in her lower lashes.

Mike's intense look softened, his eyes warming as a tender smile stretched on his lips. "I *promise*."

El felt all the tension leaving her chest at his simple but powerful words. All the weight of fear and pain left her shoulders in one quick flutter and she smiled lovingly at Mike, moving her hand into his hair, her fingers getting lost in the wild dark locks as she playfully tugged him closer.

The last thing she saw was the most blissful and happy smile on Mike's beautiful lips before her own pressed to his, her heart racing with exhilaration as their mouths moved together, every bit as intense and powerful as the words they had spoken.

"I love you," El whispered against his lips, her nose nudging against his own as their mouths stretched into wide grins.

"I love you too El," Mike murmured softly, his forehead resting against her own. "And I know sometimes it's hard to carry on, to forget the past. But I want to be your strength when you're tired and I want to always be there for you. No matter what, I want you to turn to me."

Mike gulped nervously as he reached for his pocket, his face moving slightly away from El's catching her attention as she watched him, confusion furrowing her brow for a moment before her eyes widen as Mike turned back to her, a bashful smile on his face as he held out a small box to her.

"What is this?" El whispered breathlessly, her gaze captivated by the plush velvet box, her fingers brushed over it, trembling slightly from the adrenaline that surged through her body.

"It's your Valentine's present," Mike said with a side smile as he watched her amazement. "I know we said we would exchange gifts at school but..." he shrugged his shoulder and nodding his head to El, encouraging her to open her gift.

She gave him a shy smile, biting her lower lip to try and contain her excitement as she carefully opened the box lid and gasped at the beautiful ring that lay inside. With shaky fingers El lifted the beautiful piece of jewellery out of the box and stared at it in wonder.

It was a gold ring with a beautiful design of leaves intricately woven around one another, there was an array of beautiful gems encrusted into the leaves, one was a sparkling purple, the other a beautiful blend of blue and white and the third a sheen glisten of soft white, almost creamy in appearance.

"It's a promise ring," Mike quickly blurted out the same moment El's eyes found the italic writing in the middle of the ring, "promise" standing so bold with so much meaning that her chest ached with the emotion such a ring could provide.

"And those are your birth stones," Mike whispered, his finger gently pointing out the gems of alexandrite, moonstone and pearl. The tip of his finger carefully moved to the woven leaves, "and I um, well I liked the whole leaves because it reminded me of Mirkwood in fall

and that's when..."

"We met," El finished for him in a choked voice, a tear escaping down her cheek as she slowly looked up at Mike. "I love it," she breathed out, her voice quivering. "Mike I love it so much."

"Really?" he asked nervously, his eyes flickering over El's face as if trying to detect a lie.

"Yes!" She giggled in exasperation that he would *ever* think she wouldn't love anything he gave her. "It's perfect, like you."

Mike beamed, his face filling with the same adorable smile that had graced his lips all the way back at the Snow Ball. It was a grin filled with relief, excitement and so much love that El couldn't help but melt.

"Will you put it on for me?" El asked breathlessly, her body buzzing with love and happiness as she watched Mike eagerly take the ring from her.

He looked at her hands and frowned, "um, which finger do you want it on?"

"This one," El pointed to the third finger on her left hand. She knew from her soaps this was the finger that would hold an engagement ring and a wedding ring in the future. But in this moment, this promise ring was the most important, and it represented more to El then she could even explain. It was a part of Mike with her at all times, a part of his heart and of his promise to always protect her, to love her and keep her safe.

Mike didn't argue, simply smiling happily as he carefully pushed the ring on her finger, both of them watching it move down her finger, knowing it would stay there for a very long time.

El couldn't help but sigh happily as she started at it, flexing her fingers to see it glimmer in the soft glow of the lamp. "Perfect," she exclaimed.

"Yeah...perfect," Mike whispered, his words so heavy with emotion that when El met his gaze she knew he wasn't talking about the ring.

Their eyes stayed on one another, a chemistry between them that couldn't even be explained, something that only actions could even get close to expressing.

And so with Mike's promises firmly in her grasp, protecting her and keeping her loved, she fell into his embrace. His heart hers, and her heart his. The one who she could always turn to, the one who would always keep her warm. The one who would apologise profusely to her dad when he didn't get her back home before the Chief arrived, the one who would get a lecture from his mother and endure a talk from his father.

The one who would always love her and the one who would *always* save her from the storm.